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# House Beautiful

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YOUTHFUL



An Allyson Reynolds diptych adds a burst of color to a living room in Rye, New York. Designer Sara Gilbane treated the clients' sofa to a glamorous makeover with Schumacher's Antique Linen Velvet, trimmed in bullion fringe by Samuel & Sons. Walling up a doorway to the right of the sofa created more space for a traditional seating arrangement. The clients' club chair is covered in Classic Cloth's Limoges. Stool from Bunny Williams Home in Vaughan's Milas. Side tables from Mecox Gardens. Lamps by Roy Hamilton for Christopher Spitzmiller.

SUNSHINE AND COLOR  
BREATHE LIFE INTO A TRADITIONAL  
SUBURBAN TUDOR

# PIRIT

Interior design by SARA GILBANE Interview by JEN RENZI Photographs by FRANCESCO LAGNESE



I can't believe four kids live in this house—it's impeccable!

NE: And they're all under 10—it blows my mind. Decided to make for a lot of clients: had input and strong opinions on furniture and colors.

All six of them love bold hues. The husband and wife both like jewel tones and vivid colors. We brought those hues into rooms in a way that was playful and still somewhat neutral, keeping the happier colors in the living room and the more serious because the library, sunroom, living room, and sunroom all onto one another, like an antique. Many colors repeat: dark blue, lavender, teal, and that color seen in the dining room. The colors are tied together, yet every room has its own personality. What makes a room into a room is having it be different than the one before it.

Can the makeover extend to the floor plan?

We reworked a previous addition to a Tudor-style house, which was built in 1919, remodeling the kitchen and creating an adjacent dining room to make that area practical for family use. But the overall house stayed the same, in terms of size. The clients had lived in the house a year before renovating, so they knew how they used the space and which rooms had issues.

What were the issues?

Most homes, but the floor plan was quite linear, which made the spaces seem like they were dead-end hallways. It's tough when you have no room is the natural solution. The living room, for example, had too many doorways; the dining room encouraged lingered for additional seats. The decor started out very dated then we began bringing in modern stools, another sofa by the fireplace—that room kept sucking up energy! Which was hard on the clients because the more we brought in, the more they felt—and the more they loved the room.



Do the clients entertain often?

They do, which meant choosing pieces that could be moved around. We had to be very thoughtful about the furniture plan in general due to sheer numbers: With four kids, we needed ample seating everywhere.

Hence that deep L-shape banquette in the sunroom, perfect for tea parties—or slumber parties.

That was the game-changer for the room, which had shoebox proportions. Previously, there was one sofa in front of the fireplace, and the family never hung out there. I designed the banquette to run the whole length and width of the room. Working with the quirks of the house is what leads you to the most unique moments! That piece is so comfortable, and with the dark-blue variegated fabric, it can take spills. The L-shape configuration also makes the seating really multipurpose. The couple have thrown parties where they've opened the doors leading to the patio and set up one long catering table that can seat 40.

ABOVE: Gilbane in the living room.

The pillow is in China Seas' Raffles. OPPOSITE: The curves of the foyer's Made Goods mirror mimic the lines of the Swedish Rococo console by Tara Shaw Maison. The walls are covered in a sky-blue grass cloth from Clarence House that the designer had painted with tree branches and cattails by Brian G. Leaver. "The entry was the perfect place to set the tone for the rest of the house, with a motif that's whimsical and sophisticated, yet timeless," Gilbane says.

Was art an important part of the design plan?

A traditional house with so many rooms can feel stuffy. Art was hugely helpful in terms of balancing out the more formal elements. It breathes new life into a room. That moth painting above the living room sofa—to me it just said 'young family.' We worked with art dealer [and *House Beautiful* contributing editor] Blair Voltz Clarke on a number of commissions.

You chose nature motifs: the foyer's mural, the fish in the breakfast room...

And those magnolia blossoms on the living room walls—it's like walking through a garden. That was the final piece we installed in the room, and I thought, Now we're in business! I didn't want the clients to have to explain their works. You can feel put on the spot when asked what a piece is about or why you bought it. Sometimes the reason is as simple as, 'I like flowers, and this artist did a great representation of them.' Many artworks nod to their history, like the Southern oaks in the foyer, a reference to the wife's roots. That's a reason we love working with young families: You are creating a space that's going to be part of someone's childhood memories.

In contrast to the whimsical, high-energy living areas, the master suite is a serene, grown-up haven.

To have an adult room here feels like a total luxury. While the quiet palette is a departure from the rest of the house, the use of soft, neutral patterns is consistent with the overall feeling. The textures of silk, velvet, cashmere, and embroidery enliven the room. As you can see, fabrics and wallpapers are my weaknesses.

You seem to have had the most fun designing the kids' rooms.

Absolutely, especially the eldest son's room, which we call the tree house. We covered the walls and ceiling in a grass cloth, so it feels like you're in a hut. The day they moved in, the other kids saw that space and were like, 'That's not fair!' He lucked out and got the coolest room in the house.

PRODUCED BY DORETTA SPERDUTO